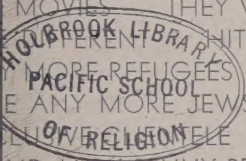


SOCIAL ACTION

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The Truth About Anti-Semitism

SOCIAL ACTION

Magazine

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Place in the Sun For All People



"There is a wall down the middle of America, a wall of suspicion, distrust, snobbery, hatred, and guilt. On one side is the majority of our people—white, Protestant and Gentile—with social, economic, and religious patterns of behavior derived from Anglo-Saxon and North-European ancestors. On the other side are people who because of color, religion or cultural background are not allowed to be full citizens of the United States," writes Wallace Stegner, author of *One Nation*. He is referring to 4,500,000 Jews, 13,000,000 Negroes, 3,500,000 Mexicans, 127,000 Japanese Americans and many other minorities whose plight the Protestant churches protest each year on Race Relations Sunday and during Brotherhood Week.

This year *Social Action's* intercultural relations issue concentrates on one of these peoples walled off from the mainstream of American life—the Jews, and seeks to discover the *many* causes of anti-Semitism. The striking disagreement between Dr. Isaac Graeber and Dr. Samuel Koenig, both eminent scholars of human relations, attests the difficulty of fixing responsibility. On the whole, Dr. Graeber ascribes anti-Semitism chiefly to the Christian religion, while Dr. Koenig emphasizes the role of the Jewish religion. Dr. Graeber's article particularly, with its treatment of the relation of the Christian Church to the Jew, represents one of several possible interpretations of a highly complex historical problem. Readers may compare the thesis of each author with alternative views, and perhaps be prompted to a fresh examination of the controversial issues involved.

The churches' task of making a place in the sun for all peoples is an urgent one. For the end of the war has confronted our nation with a growing wave of intolerance and prejudice.

—K. U.

THE TRUTH ABOUT ANTI-SEMITISM

Its Religious, Economic and Political Aspects

By ISACQUE GRAEBER

Ever since the beginning of the Christian era the Jews have always encountered Gentile hostility. While layers of friendliness or casual neutrality have submerged the hostility on occasion, the "normal" conditions of life in the Diaspora have not permitted the Jews to circulate save in situations to which Gentiles react approvingly or at least neutrally. Therefore, open expressions of Gentile hostility, more or less frequently manifested, are also "normal" features of life in the West. Furthermore, these hostile reactions, though at times sporadic, have generally become set in fixed underlying patterns, in traditional attitudes, and even in formulated principles of opinion and behavior. What we call anti-Semitism in the strict sense of the word today—the secular, political "philosophy" and program of Jew-hatred, with its pseudo-scientific bases of racialist theory—is but a recent variant of an ancient type united with modern issues and modern tensions.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ANTI-SEMITISM

Deliberate, systematic, organized hostility toward the Jew stamps anti-Semitism as more than another instance of social friction between a majority and a minority; it is a much tougher and much more complicated problem. A cogent, though not necessarily valid, hypothesis suggests that anti-Semitism is the result of differences between Jews and other groups. Because Jews have been a cultural minority in all Christian countries, the patterns of anti-Jewish hostility are practically universal within all countries dominantly Christian; because they have constituted a minority without interruption, national traditions

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of anti-Semitic attitudes have become established traits of these cultures. Any program for modern action must be conditioned by the premise that these traits exist, that they are living parts of the cultural legacy of the Western world.

Anti-Jewish movements have varied from time to time and from country to country. No plan designed to cope with the impending threat in America can evade the responsibility of plumbing the depths of the past, for only by comparison with earlier or contemporary experiences in Europe can the conditions prevalent in America be placed in proper perspective. While it is a distortion to view anti-Semitism except as a composite social phenomenon, analysis of its causes demands an arbitrary dissection of its several parts.

So far as I am aware there is not as yet any generally accepted explanation of the root meaning of anti-Semitism. Many causes have been alleged for the growth and persistence of this social malady and these causes have doubtless contributed, each its share, to the total effect; but, it is submitted, they have not all been present or operative all the time, though anti-Semitism has been present and active all through the period since it made its appearance. There are students on the subject who think that the types of anti-Semitism of the ancient, medieval and modern periods differ radically in their nature. But it is the view of this writer that since we can recognize in all periods an inter-mingling of the same elements, though in different proportions—religious antagonism, hatred of the stranger, national rivalry, economic competition—the resemblances are greater than the differences, and there is thus sufficient unity of character in anti-Jewish movements of different periods and areas to justify a comparative study.

Varieties of Prejudice

Is the attitude of hostility to Jews to be interpreted as a special case of phenomena familiar in the relations between groups? Is the treatment of the Jews simply one instance of the relation of minorities to dominant majorities? Is it just a

case of the intolerance of strangers, or of a competitive struggle between groups?

In approaching these questions it is necessary to make certain distinctions. We must distinguish first between the attitude of dislike for the Jews and the reasons which are given for it. The latter are of astonishing variety ranging from the charges of predatory business habits, greediness, and aggressive pushfulness made by the man in the street to the elaborate racial theories of the academic anti-Semite. We must also, I think, distinguish different degrees of intensity of the feeling of hostility which may amount to a difference in kind. There is the dislike by many who have no personal experience of Jews at all and who simply absorb the attitudes prevalent in their circles. There is the "social myth" of anti-Semitism which has been rationalized by the charge that Jews, in some secret conclave and by their control of world finance, directed the political affairs of Europe and other countries; this myth finds its latest expression in the assertion that the Jews planned and caused and financed the second World War.

The milder forms of anti-Semitism exhibit the characteristics which we are wont to group as prejudices. By this I do not mean to assert that the beliefs entertained by those who dislike Jews necessarily contain no grain of truth, but rather that those beliefs are of the nature of pre-judgments. Qualities are attributed to Jews not on the basis of direct experience, but rather because they are qualities which the term "Jew" has come to suggest, which one expects to find in Jews. The structure of the judgments on which these beliefs are founded is easy to analyze. They are based on (a) attribution to Jews in general of offensive qualities in fact noted in a few; (b) specification or the labelling of certain qualities as specifically Jewish which are in fact common among many other people, *e.g.*, vulgarity, pushfulness; (c) the tendency to overlook desirable qualities in the Jew, to regard them as exceptional when they cannot be ignored or to refuse to regard them as typical when they have at least as much claim to be considered typical as the unfavor-

able qualities; (d) discrimination or the tendency to condemn certain acts when committed by Jews which perhaps would not be noted, or would be condoned, when committed by others.

What Is the Jewish Group?

I have so far spoken of a mass of beliefs or judgments which have gathered round the name of the Jew, and I have indicated their logical structure. It is clear, however, that this body of beliefs would neither have persisted nor had any effective influence on behavior if it were not linked with emotional drives due to underlying social tension and conflict. The hostility to Jews is clearly a form of group rivalry. A vulgar newly-rich Jew is not despised merely as an individual but as a representative of Jews in general. Economic rivalry between Jews and non-Jews would cause no more bitterness than normal business competition between individuals if the Jew were not regarded as a "stranger." The fundamental problem is therefore why the Jew has remained a "stranger" even in countries where he has been settled for a thousand years.

This raises the further question as to what sort of a group the Jews are. That they are not a race is now generally admitted. Whether they are a nation or not depends on the way we define nation. The problem of Jewish nationhood becomes practically important only when discussing the desirability of giving the Jews independent political status in a country of their own—Palestine. Whether they are a nation or not, the Jews are certainly a body of people who feel bound to one another, to whatever historical factors this bond of union may be due. While "nation" does not adequately describe the historical unity of the Jewish people, neither does the term "religious community." They are an ethnic group with a structure which resembles in some respects the structure of other ethnic groups, but with peculiarities which give them a character of their own.

Peculiarities of the Jew

To understand the nature of these peculiarities it would be

necessary to survey the whole field of Jewish history, but there are a number of points which stand out fairly clearly. In the first place, the dispersal of the Jews is world-wide. They are to be found as minorities small or large in all parts of the world, but nowhere have they a center which can be called their own. Since there is a bond of union between the Jews of different countries, though this is seemingly not as effective in practice as their enemies suppose, the Jews of any one country, even though they be regarded as nationals of that country, are regarded by the Gentile world as members of a wider group—the Jewish people. In the second place—and this is the crux of the problem—throughout the greater part of their “abnormal” history, the Jews, it is argued, have through their particularism, isolation, and their obstinate refusal to assimilate, succeeded in retaining their distinctiveness.

Assimilation Is Not the Answer

Thus, in a recent debate between Professors G. C. Coulton and R. Travers Herford in England's most learned periodical, the *Hibbert Journal*,* Historian Coulton, in a rather brief but laborious analysis of the causes of anti-Semitism, points to the exclusiveness of the Jews “as the root of anti-Semitism.” And the solution of the problem he finds in assimilation, *i.e.*, that the Jews should abolish all their differences, and become in all respects as one of the peoples round about. As regards the exclusiveness of the Jew, that was surely only the Gentile explanation of the fact that the Jews were unable to join in some practices of their neighbors. They did not “repel the Gentile,” as Professor Coulton asserts. Rather the Gentile repelled the Jew and called him “the enemy of the human race.” To say, as Coulton says, “that Israel built and fortified its own Ghetto before the outside world laid siege to it” is to ignore the historical fact that the essence of the Ghetto was that it rested on

*“Anti-Semitism,” by G. C. Coulton in *Hibbert Journal*, April, 1944, pp. 226-230; “The Meaning of Anti-Semitism: Another View,” by R. Travers Herford, July, 1944, pp. 341-347.

compulsion from without. The mere assemblage of Jews in some part of a city so as to form a Jew's Quarter did not make that a Ghetto in the true meaning of the term.

As for assimilation, there has been too much superficial and confused thinking about it, not alone by historians but also by sociologists. Whatever else assimilation may be, it is no real cure for anti-Semitism, because—to use its popular connotation—it calls on the Jews to give up all they stand for and come over to the side of the majority. On these lines were the Protestants right or wrong in refusing to come over to the Catholics at the Reformation? Why do the Catholics refuse to relinquish their differences, presumably to live happily ever after with the dominantly Protestant community? In point of fact, persuasive Catholic apologists have in recent years identified our civilization with Christianity and Christianity with the Church of Rome, as though Protestantism were not part of the fabric of the western world. If the Jews regard themselves as appointed to a mission to the world in the service of God, it is neither a foolish prejudice nor selfish and arrogant, but a solemn duty, to avoid what would make them unable to fulfill that mission.

The Christian Church Is To Blame

James Parkes, in his masterly book, *The Conflict of the Church with the Synagogue*, has laid bare what he elsewhere calls the tap root of anti-Semitism, the cause without which there might never have been any such display of ill-feeling at all. He shows that it was the teaching of the Christian Church which put into words the first definite recognition of a ground of enmity on the part of Christians against the Jews. The ground of enmity was that the Jews had rejected Christ and killed him, and had persisted in their refusal to accept him ever since. While permitted to survive until Christ's Second Coming, they were fated to live in a station suitable to a people steeped in guilt. Dr. Parkes traces the development of this anti-Jewish condemnation down to the time of Charlemagne and proves his case with an abundance of documentary evi-

dence. As to the facts disclosed in those documents there can be no dispute, nor as to the truth of the conclusion which he draws, namely, that before the rise of the Christian Church there was nothing that could rightly be called anti-Semitism, and that this appeared as the result of the Christian teaching. Dr. Parkes, after sifting the evidence for the prevalence of anti-Jewish feeling amongst Gentiles before the rise of the Church, concludes, with truth, that this anti-Jewish attitude did not amount to anti-Semitism, and accordingly rules it out from the list of possible causes of that phenomenon.

In regard to the rise of real anti-Semitism, the part played by the Christian Church consisted in clearly defining for the first time the charges against the Jews and implementing action on the basis of those charges. Stated in elementary terms it is the view of the Jew as a "Christ Killer." According to this view, the Jews bear the guilt for the rejection of Jesus as the Christ and for his crucifixion. These two charges formed a standing indictment against the Jews for all subsequent ages. The charge of rejecting Christ could be disarmed by conversion and baptism. The charge of having killed Christ could never be withdrawn or denied. On the strength of these *two* charges, the Jews were to be regarded as a people accursed forever, outside the pale of Christian fellowship and exposed to the perpetual wrath of God. This teaching expressed the attitude definitely taken by the Church, and officially affirmed from time to time when the Church acquired the control of imperial power in the fourth century. The writings of Chrysostom, especially a series of sermons delivered in A.D. 387 against the Jews, show with what deadly effect hatred and fear, horror and loathing, dislike and detestation of the Jews could be expressed.

The Appeal to the Scriptures

It is to be observed that the enmity thus expressed found the evidence on which to base its attack almost entirely in the record of Jewish history in the Old Testament and not in the contemporary features of Jewish life or in individual instances

of evil-doing which might be within the knowing of those who heard or read the denunciation. The Hebrew Scriptures, which the Church appropriated, were regarded alike by Christians and Jews as having been written or caused to be written by God, and to be therefore true in every word. They were read not as a record of progressive history, but as a divine instruction of equal value throughout. The Christian interpretation of the Scriptures differed from the Jewish mainly in that all blessings bestowed upon Israel were applied by the Christian Church to itself, Christians being now the true Israel. All the curses and denunciations, all the rebukes for backsliding and threats of punishment were applied to the Jews. Against an attack so directed and based on such supporting evidence, the Jews could only protest. They could not effectively retaliate.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF ANTI-SEMITISM

Ever since the Christians gained control of the Roman Empire, the Jews have been in the position of a minority for which less and less consideration was shown. Laws were enacted which restricted Jewish liberty in various ways; and, even more than the imperial legislation, the local authority of bishops and clergy made the life of Jews more and more hard and bitter. It is no doubt true that friendly relations between Jews and Christians were not wholly prevented by decrees of the state, canons of councils and pulpit denunciation. Evidence of such racial intercourse may be traced for many centuries. But the fact remains that Christians had constantly presented to their minds the accusations in the name of the Church against the Jews—accusations to which there could be no reply. The result was the settled conviction in Christian minds—in other words, in the general public opinion in Western Europe—that the Jews really were a separate people, separate in actual fact not merely in thought, and that there actually was a barrier of some sort cutting them off from their fellowmen, making ordinary intercourse with them difficult to effect and when effected sinful.

It is this settled conviction of a real barrier between Jews and Christians, with the consequences following on it, which has remained constant, and it is this which, because it is clearly defined, may be called the main cause of anti-Semitism.

The Yellow Badge and the Ghetto

The line drawn between Christian and Jew was cut more deeply and made more visible by two institutions, set up for the purpose of making cleavage between Jew and Christian a reality in visible fact, not merely in thought and belief. These were the Yellow Badge and the Ghetto.

In 1215 Pope Innocent III caused the Lateran Council decree that every Jew above the age of childhood should wear a distinctive mark, usually a circle of yellow cloth, on some conspicuous part of his clothing to mark the fact that he was a Jew. (This was also the mark of the prostitute.) This regulation was not everywhere and at all times in practice; it was sufficiently general to cause widespread suffering and shame to Jews. An even greater wrong was inflicted on them in the institution of the Ghetto, by which Jews were compelled to live in one particular part of their city, where they were shut in every night and which they were forbidden to enlarge no matter how overcrowded it became and how unsanitary in consequence. The Ghetto in Rome dates from 1556; there were earlier ones elsewhere. For three centuries Ghettoes existed in most cities where there were Jews. The setting up of the Ghetto and the compelling of Jews to live therein was a more considerable injury than any which had been inflicted on the Jews hitherto, because it enforced upon them an unnatural mode of life, preventing the free intercourse, social, economic and intellectual, which ought to have existed between them and their fellow-citizens. It was a worse injury than persecution. Persecutions and expulsions were far-reaching in their effects, but not wholly destructive. The Ghetto inflicted an injury which never ceased, which cramped and maimed the physical and mental life of the Jewish community as a whole in every place

and all the time. Nothing more harmful to Jewry has ever been devised until, in the present day, Hitler and the Nazis have shown how to improve on the example.

So it is seen that from the First Century there has been the expression in thought, word and action of the beliefs that an actual barrier existed dividing Jews and Christians, and that the gulf between them could not and must not be bridged.

Summary: Anti-Semitism up to 1800

Until the end of the eighteenth century the bulk of the Jews lived a life of their own, segregated in various degrees from the surrounding peoples by restrictive laws imposed from without and by the need for defensive solidarity and cohesion felt from within. Though the Jews had been Europeans since Roman times, they were everywhere regarded as strangers and wanderers, hated and despised, deprived of the legal rights which they had earlier enjoyed as Roman citizens, dependent on the whims of rapacious protectors. Economic rivalry drove them from most occupations save those despised or not desired by others because they offered only limited opportunities for profitable enterprises. The feudal authorities drove them from the land and the burghers from trades and handicraft. Thus the normal incorporation of the Jew within the community was made impossible. The image of the Jew as a parasite, living on the productive work of others, ever pushing himself into spheres to which he had no right, was created and added to the causes of hatred implanted by the Church.

The suspicion of the stranger, economic rivalry and religious fanaticism combined to form a fertile soil for other antagonisms and to provide an outlet for hate and aggression originating in causes not in themselves connected with the Jews. It is a well-established generalization that in all countries where Jews have lived in any numbers there is a tendency for them to be blamed for any troubles, disappointments and disillusionment that may arise. The supposed "distinctiveness" of the Jew was deepened by persecution and restrictive laws of all kinds,

and thus deepened, generated further antagonisms. The arguments between those who maintain that the hatred of the Jews is due to their obstinate refusal to assimilate with the peoples among whom they live and those who maintain that hatred is the cause of Jewish particularism and "exclusiveness" are very unreal. Discrimination, exclusion and persecution tend to produce segregation and internal solidification of the Jewish community and these, in turn, encourage further discrimination.

The Modern Form of Anti-Semitism

The forms of anti-Semitism changed in some degree but the underlying feeling remained after the time of the emancipation first begun by the French Revolution (1789). This process of liberation was more or less grudgingly continued since Jews were henceforth recognized as having in various measures civil rights such as those possessed by their fellow citizens, and to that extent the basis of anti-Semitism was weakened. But another pretext was found, another accusation by which to justify the old belief that the Jews were a people apart, cut off from the rest of mankind.

As the nineteenth century was a period in which emphasis passed from land-owning to commerce and industry, and from the country to the town, and as the Jews were largely town dwellers* and occupied with commerce, they soon became unexpectedly "prominent." The very emancipation of the Jews, which in the West and Central Europe was attained in the latter part of the nineteenth century and affected but a small number of Jews, prepared the ground for "modern" anti-Semitism. For the first time in the history of their dispersion, the Jews enjoyed full opportunity to participate freely in all branches of economic life and, in so doing, to exercise all their abilities and accumulated experience. It was precisely in those branches in which the Jews had the widest experience—in mod-

*It is incorrect to say that the Jews were always city dwellers. In earlier periods the Jews lived almost everywhere in Europe a scattered existence in thousands of small towns and villages. With the growth of urbanization they had tended to congregate in large centers.—I.G.

ern business and finance—that there was the most intensive progress during the last century, and the role played by these two economic branches grew enormously. Far more surprising and hence no less provocative was the “success” of the emancipated Jews in politics—they jumped from the Ghetto straight into some high positions. And still more surprising and hence still more provocative was the emergence of the Jew in every field of cultural endeavor.

This almost unnatural leap from isolation and segregation to virtual integration with the dominant communities accompanied by vast advances created a favorable soil for that brand of anti-Semitism which raised the cry that the Jews had captured the best economic positions, were dominating political life, and were ravishing the national culture. The gravamen of anti-Semitism shifted from religious motives of the middle ages to modern socio-political motives, yet partly repeating those made in the middle ages against the Jews as extortioners.

Degree of Assimilation

Relative emancipation and integration of the Jew has been achieved only in the areas where the Jewish population was always small. In the areas of great Jewish concentrations the Jews continued to live in communities with an intense life of their own. There was in these areas no possibility of, nor temptation to, “assimilation” on a large scale. The masses of the people around were an illiterate peasantry with whom assimilation was out of the question. On top was a landed aristocracy, equal but for different reasons precluding assimilation.* Persecution nearly everywhere strengthened Jewish unity. Where assimilation did occur it was confined to the upper grades of the social scale and left the masses unaffected.

In the Western European countries the number of Jews was

*“While a minority is often assimilated if its culture is inferior to that of the majority, the converse does not appear to happen except on a very small scale. This is one of the chief reasons why Jews and Germans have not assimilated in Eastern Europe.” “The Problem of the Multinational State,” in *Nationalism*, Royal Institute of International Affairs, p. 288.)

small. The older settlements came to acquire the culture of the peoples among whom they lived, and, it is generally agreed, made important contributions to that culture. Whether they would have been able to retain their identity as a group apart from the renewal of the population due to immigration by Jews from Eastern Europe is a matter of doubt.

Lack of Jewish Unity

The unequal cultural and economic development of Jews in different parts of the world had an important influence on the unity and cohesion of the Jewish people. The relatively small, secular-educated and wealthier communities of Western Europe and the older sections (Iberian and German Jews) of American Jewry developed at first an attitude of benevolent superiority to the incoming Jews from Eastern Europe. They were touched by their distress and always ready to obtain for them the help of the governments with whom they had some influence. But they did not look at the Jewish problem as their problem. This feeling of distance between the long settled Jews and those of recent origin accounts in some measure for the helplessness of the Jews as a whole when confronted with a major crisis.

ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF ANTI-SEMITISM

The distribution of occupations among Jews has, as is well known, certain peculiarities and is generally different from that which prevails among the peoples in whose midst they live. To see—and this is a widely current view among Gentiles and Jews—in the peculiarities of occupational stratification a primary cause of anti-Semitism seems to me to be unreasonable. Anti-Semitism already existed at a time when the occupational structure of the Jews differed little, if at all, from that of other peoples, and the hatred showed itself in fact in the persistent efforts to prevent the Jew from engaging in the productive occupations. There is abundant evidence for the view that the Jews, like other struggling minorities, have often been compelled to choose occupations neglected or despised by others,

or to invent new ones. The "abnormalities" of the economic structure are thus an *effect* rather than a *cause* of anti-Semitism, though once produced they hinder the "normalization" of Jewish life and thus serve to foster anti-Semitic feeling.

Yet the widely held view that most Jews are engaged in so-called non-productive life, *i.e.*, in business or commerce, is absurd. The facts are difficult to summarize as the situation varies in different countries. As countries become industrialized and commercialized the proportion of Jews engaged in commerce declines. In the less developed countries the Jews played a greater part in business but were also prominent in small-scale industry and handicraft. In pre-war Poland, for example, nearly one-third of the Jewish population was engaged in industry, the vast majority being artisans. The bulk of these worked in small workshops and were thrown out with the development of large-scale industry. A few Jews were permitted in the basic industries, such as mining and metallurgy and others; most of them were concentrated in the textile and clothing industry. The net result of this concentration was that Jewish workers



What is "the Jew"? He may be a pale, bearded push cart peddler selling sweet potatoes, herrings, potted geraniums or books on New York's East Side. Or he may be a great philanthropist. Racially, socially, economically, politically, Jews are so varied they defy stereotyping.

were economically and socially isolated from other workers. This economic and social isolation, as well as the conspicuousness of the Jews in the industrial and commercial middle class callings, has in no small degree conditioned the attitude of labor toward Jewry and the "Semitic question."

Labor and the Jew

On the whole, it can be stated that the *initial* reaction of labor towards the Jews and the persecution of the Jews was one of confusion and vacillation. The fact that the enemies of labor had exploited the anti-Semitic movements to social and political ends, that the "Semitic question" served as a device with which to confuse labor, as well as re-direct social discontent into more auspicious channels, was realized by all-too-few of the labor leaders. Doubtless this attitude percolated into sections of the rank and file in the labor movement. Of course, there were always high-sounding, pious protests, resolutions passed at labor conventions,* but hardly any implementation of an educational or political character among the membership. Recent surveys suggest the widespread existence of latent anti-Semitism among large sections of American labor.† Recent dramatic and grim events have awakened many a labor leader to the realization that while "anti-Semitism is the socialism of blockheads" it is also the anti-socialism of blockheads. The various measures, educational, political and therapeutic, which the leadership of the more progressive wing of American labor has taken to implement its stand on anti-Semitism, are indeed a positive sign of our times.‡ It is to be hoped that its work will be intensified and thus reach the many millions of organized and unorganized labor, especially today when we are vitally concerned with the economic outlook of the United States after the war.

*Proceedings of A.F. of L. Baltimore Convention (1916), p. 22; Proceedings of 54th Annual Convention of the A.F. of L. (1934), p. 11.

†*Survey of Anti-Semitism and Anti-Semitic Influences in Terre Haute, Indiana . . . Pittsfield, N. Y. . . . Hartford, Conn.* Council for Democracy, July, 1942.

‡*Labor's Enemy: Anti-Semitism*, Pamphlet Press (Reynal and Hitchcock), 1945.

Jews in the Professions

As far as the professions are concerned the percentage of Jews engaged in them is usually much higher than among non-Jews, and many think that the Jews suffer from "over-production" of professional men and women. It should be remembered, however, that the Jews were part of that economic, industrial-urban development which during the last hundred years has created new demands, new opportunities for specialized, expert, professional services. The so-called over-production of Jewish professionals and intellectuals was further aggravated by what Professor Ernest Barker describes as the progressive "clericalization of society." The disproportion between demand and supply of professional and intellectual and expert services proved an important factor in the intensification of anti-Semitism among the educated classes of Europe. More recently the political-economic antagonisms — *i.e.*, economic competition combined with competition for the leadership of the nation—more than other considerations have inclined professionals, intellectuals, and students towards boycotts, *numerus clausus* (quota allotments), and pogroms. It is noteworthy that students at universities and the educated classes generally proved the most enthusiastic supporters of nationalistic, fascist movements in postwar Europe.

Jews in Commerce

Likewise, the proportion of Jews engaged in commerce and normal middle class callings was usually much higher than among non-Jews. It should be recalled that the Jewish commercial and industrial middle class was favored by a combination of factors. Important in this connection is the fact that they were the beneficiaries, for a short interval, of the modern idea of equal national citizenship and of the liberal nineteenth century axioms—the foundation of human society in the rights of individual man and the laissez-faire doctrine of an economic realm of free and independent units. It took a widespread shake-up in the liberal economy before the commercial and indus-

trial middle classes, for a time the apostles of liberal democracy and toleration, gradually changed their political association. "The protection of national interests," or support against the competition of foreigners, encouraged these classes to favor those who used national slogans, and the politicians returned that support by promising to eliminate competition.

History of Anti-Semitism in America

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries America appears to have been better off than Europe so far as anti-Semitism is concerned. Its economy was an expanding one. Society was in flux; there were no feudal residues. Economic individualism and commercial thinking were prevalent among Gentiles and Jews alike. Protestant individualism which lost its exclusiveness in the fire of the common struggle on the frontier and found expression in the political system of the country, did the rest to proclaim that the American dream of an ever-expanding life was to come true; that "equality and opportunity" were the keynote of American institutional life. Unlimited opportunities relieved the normal tensions of a highly industrialized economic society.

But, by the end of the first World War, all these basic conditions had changed, and anti-Semitism emerged in America comparable to the European pattern. What began with an intense anti-Catholic campaign during the war was soon transformed into an intense anti-Semitic campaign, because domestic and foreign conditions were ripe. Great numbers of Jews from Eastern and Southeastern Europe flowed into a society already jelled. Before the immigrants could be absorbed, the fever of nationalism promoted by the war spread over America and found expression in such forms as the spectacular growth of the Ku Klux Klan. Connected with the nationalist movement were the native, lower-middle class elements "back home" who were undergoing rapid economic and social changes. As a consequence, they had considerable ground for anxiety and fear of the future. Their anti-Semitism was a desperate attempt to secure and maintain a place in the community.



At the end of the last war the worst wave of anti-Semitism in American history was fostered by the Ku Klux Klan. This Klan is attempting to renew its activity after this war and crosses have been blazing again in the South.

A powerful external force of this new development was the Russian revolution. This upheaval, viewed apprehensively by conservative and other elements as the possible forerunner of a world-wide socialistic revolution, was now extensively advertised as a Jewish achievement. The refabrication of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion in the *Dearborn Independent* and the sensational anti-Red campaign in the newspapers was an expression of this tendency. As Frank Bohn says in his book, *The Ku Klux Klan Interpreted*: "The plutocrats and anarchists, the profiteers and labor leaders, the international bankers and the international bolsheviki, rural America now begins to christen them, the Jews."

The American Pattern

In the Midwest the now familiar pattern began to unfold itself. There was a silent economic boycott of Jewish stores. The postwar "invasion" of the smaller Western and Southern towns by Jewish retail merchants was opposed by native American competitors. "No Jews Wanted" advertisements increased greatly:

Anti-Semitism on the economic level took the form of: 1) an inter-class conflict between rural Gentiles and urban Jews, between borrowers and lenders, between buyers and sellers; or 2) an intra-class conflict between Jews and Gentiles in similar occupations competing for places in the same occupation. The academic precedent of a *numerus clausus* in American colleges and universities was established in a period (1913-1925) when, interestingly enough, student enrollment increased in institutions of higher learning from 332,696 to 822,859. In 1924, the drastic policy of curtailed immigration, more than any other act, became the symbol of an America growing "static and stereotyped."

Should Skill Be Restricted?

Is an ethnic minority entitled to as many positions in the public and economic life of the general community as it can obtain? Or should Jewish participation be reduced until proportionate with the size of the Jewish group in relation to the total population? Eastern and Southeastern Europe has replied: Jews are entitled to no participation. The main plank in Fascist Germany was to remove all Jews from positions in government, the professions and business, which according to Hitler rightfully belonged to the Germans.

In America the natural reply of the "neutral" Gentile would be: Why not, if they have gained their places by fair means and are best qualified for them? And as a client is free to go to the lawyer, doctor, pharmacist or dentist whom he most trusts, it might be said that natural selection will fix and limit the number of Jews who can make a living by law, medicine, pharmacy or dentistry. And the same answer might be given about the commercial activities of the Jews. They will find their own level. The problem presents itself today in a greatly aggravated form in America, where the question of the Jewish minority (5,000,000 of them) being able to dominate highly developed sectors of our economy has been gaining some currency.*

*See footnote on opposite page.

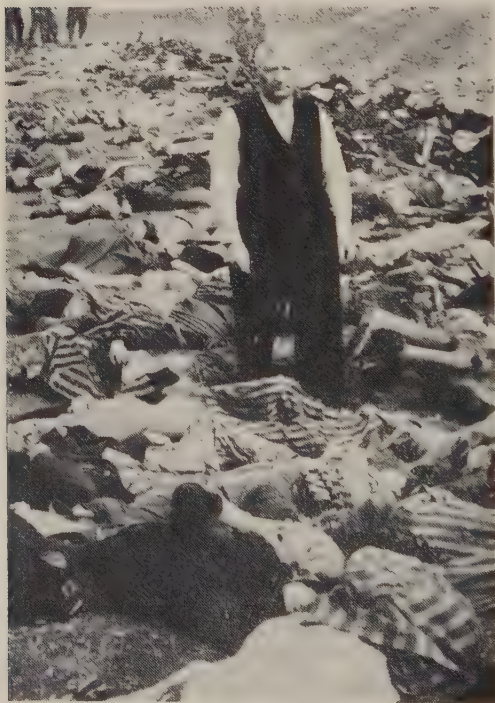
Instead of claiming that Jews monopolize such and such professions, businesses or industries, the "nationalists" assert that the Jews set the tone to them, and that this tone is in conflict with the ethic and ideals towards which the dominant community is said to have been striving for generations. The recent experiences in Germany should serve as a grim warning against accepting the elimination of Jews as a solution of a society's moral problems. Moreover, the course of events in America indicates that in growing professions or businesses newcomers are quickly absorbed and hardly noticed. Then follows a period of stabilization and of fixing of standards. Outsiders who come in accept the standards that they find. But we are now living in a third period—a period of breakdown of our social and economic order. Shrinking markets and opportunities, "the overproduction" of entrants into professions where opportunities are not increasing, make it doubly difficult for newcomers to earn a living.

One source of newcomers to American society in the last 25 years has been Eastern and Southeastern European Jews. Therefore, it is easy to see how a breakdown in our social order can by clever propaganda or by rationalizations become associated with the Jews. The fact is forgotten that Jews in well-established positions are not showing qualities that undermine the accepted ethos, and that others who are not Jewish are showing them. The decline, where it exists, is merely part of that whole breakdown of civilization which has led us to the present juncture. This breakdown has been most evident to the ordinary man in the political field—a field in which it would be difficult to link Jews with the chief agents of decline, either in totalitarian or democratic states. In a country such as

*In a national poll conducted in 1942-43, the question was asked: "Do you think the Jewish people in the U.S. have too much influence in the business world, not enough influence, or about the amount of influence they should have?" Of all of whom the inquiry was made, including those who had no opinion, 50 per cent felt the Jews had too much influence. Excluding those who had no opinion, 59 per cent answered affirmatively while 39 per cent responded in the negative. (National Opinion Research Center, University of Denver. Trend of Semitic Question: Report VII, Feb. 12, 1943.)

the United States, raising the Jewish issue, especially as it concerns Jewish self-discipline, is a dangerous red herring. For it is not of importance whether the group whose conduct is debasing the community standards contains a high or low proportion of Jews. The decline must be attacked as such, and the attack is merely rendered futile when, as in Europe, Jews of the highest character were lumped together with Jewish offenders. Offenders remain untouched because they are not Jews.

So long as we live in a competitive "democratic" society in which one person's success is related to another's failure, it is not difficult to understand why any and every excuse will be used to make that failure more probable. Hatred against the Jew, the European immigrant or the Negro improves the eco-



"Have we learned nothing from the horrible pictures of the concentration camps which have been appearing in our papers day after day? Are our memories so short that we do not recall how in Germany this unparalleled barbarism started by discrimination against the Jewish people? It has ended in brutality and cruelty meted out to all people," observes Eleanor Roosevelt. Any man who loathes fascism will fight anti-Semitism.

non dissatisfactions of the majority group, to whose obvious advantage it is to keep the prejudice alive. In Germany the economic motive for the elimination of the Jews is clear; even before the Nazis came into power they promised their followers the jobs held by Jews, and at least that part of their plank the Nazis fulfilled.

The economic gain is not the only one made possible by prejudices. There is also the gain in status from the inferior position of another caste or group. As Professor Frederick Schuman once put it:

The creation of a pariah caste, singled out for discrimination and contempt serves another function useful to every ruling class. It affords to those disgruntled strata near the bottom of the social hierarchy the emotional satisfaction of being able to look down upon a group which is still lower in the social scale. Anti-Semitism in the modern world has frequently played this role.

It is probable that no one of these gains is clearly recognized by the person infected with anti-Semitism. Instead, he rationalizes his behavior either as dictated by some noble purpose, or as justified by the characteristics of the minority group. He gives good reasons instead of true ones.

Notwithstanding the fact that the history of contacts between ethnic and national groups is a long chronicle of such rationalizations, there are many well-meaning Gentiles who seem to be committed to the view that behavior of a minority group plays an important part in the origin of hostility against it. Jacques Barzun has made a careful study of the anti-Semitism in France at the time of the Dreyfus affair. He points out the manner in which diametrically opposed characteristics were ascribed to Jews as the occasion required. The arguments ran somewhat as follows:

(a) The ills of France were due to the Jews; (b) the Jews were all Germans and sold French military secrets to the land whence they got their names of Stein, Meyer, Reinach; but (c) many of the ills of France were due to big finance; (d) all financiers were Jews and all Jews were financiers; they chose the business because it appealed to their unscrupulous tendencies, among which were

(e) their lack of national loyalty to any people; their pit ceence for their own racial kin across the borders; their insatiableFest for gain. Of course, (f) the Jews were the cause of all socia unrest for they were indolent paupers plotting in Ghettos. (g) All socialists were Jews and all Jews were socialists.

The actual behavior—or rather misbehavior—of individuals of a minority group, especially if that minority be Jewish, plays a relatively insignificant part in the origin of hostility against it.

A Political Weapon

Reference must be made now to the deliberate use of anti-Semitism as a political weapon. The part played by anti-Semitism in Nazi and Fascist propaganda is familiar, and the fact that Jews provide a convenient and defenseless object on which discontent can be focussed has long been known and utilized. The model was provided in the movement founded by Court Chaplain Adolf Stoecker, founder of the original Christian Social Labor Party or Christian Social Party (1878). Christian principles were said to be endangered by liberal, democratic Judaism. Jews were attacked as being at once the mainspring of capitalism and revolutionary socialism, a line of attack which has since become very common. What lends the anti-Jewish campaign its significance today is the fact that it has become one of the major political techniques of the twentieth century. It is primarily its function as a tool of reaction that imparts to modern anti-Semitism its distinctive and dangerous quality.

The technique as it emerged from Nazi practice followed a clear and well-defined pattern. It enabled the Nazis to achieve power by making the Jews a *symbol of hatred* and the incarnation of everything the German people feared, by attracting support of the middle and lower middle class and the bulk of the educated classes who thought they had much to gain from the liquidation of Jewish economic competition or those who thought that they would fill the jobs of the ousted Jews, and by urging the elimination of the Jews as the social panacea. Anti-Semitism helped them to consolidate their power by turn-

ing dissatisfaction, economic distress, social tension and national resentment from the regime to the Jews, affording an auspicious outlet for emotional frustration, and by creating a new inferior caste on whom all could look down. It contributed greatly to the success of Nazi imperialist aggression by enlisting large bodies of Nazi sympathizers everywhere and by impairing the social cohesion of their opponents.

Theories as to the Causes of Anti-Semitism

I want now to refer briefly to two theories of the causes of anti-Semitism: one appeals mainly to economic factors; the other, to psychological explanations. The former is found mainly in Marxist and socialist writings. They argue that anti-Semitism is a device of the capitalists to divert attention from the class struggle or a last desperate effort of the middle classes to escape the destruction with which they are held to be threatened. This theory unquestionably finds a great deal of support in historical fact, but as a generalization it is subject to qualifications. The Jew is apt to suffer not only in periods when proletarian revolutions are threatened but whenever there is serious tension of any kind. This is particularly true of periods of national excitement, as during the recent war. Too, anti-Semitism is not confined to periods of acute economic distress among the masses. Anti-Semitism cuts across class divisions. The struggle is often between members of the same class, workers against workers, merchants against merchants, members of the professions against members of the professions.

The psychological theories of the causes of anti-Semitism make use of psycho-pathology. The essence of these theories is that hatred of the Jew is at bottom a concealed hatred of Christianity, *i.e.*, it is an attack on universal love and an attempt to deplace it by the principle of force as the regulator of human relations. It is true that anti-Semitism in its recent manifestations is part of a more general attack on universalist and humanitarian ethics. But this theory, whose chief advocates have been Freud, Maurice Samuel, and C. J. Friedrich, raises

doubts. The principles of universal morality have never been so firmly rooted in Western peoples that an attack on them could only be made in deeply disguised form. It has not proved difficult in practice to reconcile the Christian ethical principles with war, intolerance and violent persecution and it is odd that at a time when Christianity is openly attacked, as it was by the Nazis, the attack on the ethics of love should have to be carefully concealed under the guise of an attack on the Jews.

CURES OF ANTI-SEMITISM

From what has been said in the foregoing pages, it will be seen that anti-Semitism is a symptom of a social disorganization, of a disease, not the disease itself. From this point of view, anti-Semitism is thus a problem, not only or even mainly for the Jews, but also for the peoples among whom they live. The real trouble appears to lie in the basic economic and social insecurity by which so many individuals are plagued, and if this increases, we may anticipate an aggravation of the friction between the sub-groups which constitute our community. The only long-term cure is a change in our society so that competition for subsistence is minimized, and every individual made at least reasonably certain that he will not be denied the necessities of life. Accordingly, it will be well for all strata of our Jewish and non-Jewish community to promote and initiate such measures as would tend to eliminate social and economic tension. Specifically, the rich Jew and the poor, no less than the member of Protestant church organizations, such as the Council for Social Action, must seek to advance the Full Employment Bill and extend the social security program. The permanent establishment of the Fair Employment Practices Commission is important but not enough.

Education—a Palliative

The social scientist is confronted at every step with the fact that well-educated people are also members of our community. The social influences to which they are continually exposed

more often than not nullify the results of their school experience. *Education has an effect*, but in the field of race and cultural relations it is for the most part a palliative. As long as one man's success is dependent upon another's failure it is almost inevitable that any excuse—race, religion, language, culture—will be employed in order to make that failure more certain.

Anti-Semitism is deeply ingrained and of very long standing. The enlightened Protestant churches could do much to nullify the effects of many centuries, as well as gradually extinguish habits of thought which have persisted so as to become automatic.

A National Home

As a partial cure the writer recommends the establishment of a national home for the Jews in Palestine. It will help eliminate the sense of homelessness and defenselessness among them. The fact remains that the real mischief, the ingrained distortion of human nature resulting from the forcing of a considerable group of human beings apart from the rest of mankind, cannot be overcome except by long and patient effort, and in a state of society very different from today.

Such a state of society could not be established, still less maintained, merely by such names as the Atlantic Charter or peace treaties. There will be needed, for any considerable change for the better, a real change of heart and mind in countless numbers of men and women in many lands, maintained through a long period of time. Churches concerned with the vital problems of the day—churches that make religion an effective instrument in society rather than obscurantism and other-worldliness—must take the initiative.

THE TRUTH ABOUT ANTI-SEMITISM

Its Social and Psychological Aspects

By SAMUEL KOENIG

Antipathy toward Jews, or anti-Semitism, is a many-sided and complex phenomenon. Anti-Semitism may be defined as an overt or covert dislike of Jews resulting in active or passive prejudice and discrimination which in its acute forms seeks actual physical abuse or even annihilation of the group. An adequate analysis of its nature and characteristics entails a consideration of its economic, political, religious, social, and psychological aspects. Here, however, we shall be concerned primarily with the two last-named facets of the problem, *i.e.*, the social and psychological, which are perhaps the most deeply-rooted and most persistent. An attempt will be made in this article to sketch the main social and psychological features of anti-Semitism and to evaluate the main approaches to the solution of the problem.

Although it is often asserted that anti-Semitism is a unique phenomenon in the history of human relationships, it is only a special case of prejudice. Neither is there anything mysterious in its occurrence, as so many claim. There is nothing unique in antagonism of one group toward another, even though in this case it has proven to be more persistent and more ubiquitous than in other cases. The problem is amenable to analysis and understanding without resort to metaphysical speculation.

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL ASPECTS

Human groups develop in the course of their existence ways of thinking and behaving, or folkways, which become peculiar

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to themselves and distinguish them from others. These folkways which in their totality make up what is often called the way of life of a group, its culture, come to be considered by the members of the groups as *the* ways, the best ways, the right ways. So compulsive in nature are the folkways in the life of a group that its members will tend to judge everything from the point of view of their cultural values. The ways of others, in so far as they differ from their own, are considered as wrong, or at least less desirable, while their own are always the best. Mankind has always divided itself into what may be called "hostile camps," into "in-groups" and "out-groups," the members of an in-group considering themselves and their own ways superior to those of the out-group and their ways. Because of this, too, members of in-groups often display a lack of sympathy, antagonism, and even feelings of hostility towards those of out-groups.



Anti-Jewish feeling in America is not necessarily violent and not necessarily promulgated by demagogues. It may appear on roadside signs and be fostered by undistinguished people who feel the need to assure themselves that they are better than someone else. To the Jew the word "Christian" often has connotations of bigotry, exclusiveness, social snobbery and persecution rather than peace and brotherhood.

While feelings of superiority, or *ethnocentrism*, with their resulting antagonistic attitudes toward outsiders expressed themselves more crudely among the so-called primitives, or uncivilized peoples, they have been present in a somewhat more refined form among all civilized nations and nationalities, or cultural groups. In fact, they have become more varied and in a sense more dangerous, because of the greater degree of rationalization and "scientific" claims that characterizes them. It would seem that primitive peoples often showed a greater respect for the deities and objects of veneration of outsiders, even enemies, than we do. They also seem to have taken less of an intolerant attitude than we do towards members of other races—race being used here in the only meaningful sense of the term, namely a group showing distinct physical characteristics.

Civilization and Racism

The rise and development of imperialism have resulted in a sharper differentiation between the races of mankind and in attempts to give to ethnocentric feelings a rational basis and to justify their existence scientifically. Aryanism, Nordicism, and other types of racism can be traced to those attempts. Similarly, the rise and intensification of nationalism led to a sharper differentiation among nationalities and, hence, to an intensification of superiority feelings among them. The more articulate among these groups, and they invariably were the more powerful, were the most successful in "proving" to the world their claims to superiority.

Thus, it would seem quite "natural" for groups with differing customs and traditions to harbor feelings of dislike for each other and to disapprove of one another's ways. When such groups with diverse cultural backgrounds are forced to live side by side, which in civilized nations is almost always the case, antagonism of one kind or another, of a greater or lesser degree, is almost inevitable, unless special pains are taken and extraordinary efforts are made to prevent them from arising

or developing. Moreover, since life in modern states almost invariably involves the existence of dominant and minority groups which differ in their cultural heritages, it is the dominant group that is in a position to be actively hostile, the "aggressor," while the minority is put in a position of having to defend itself and to retaliate by harboring only covertly feelings of hostility toward the "aggressor."

Separatism of the Jews

Viewed in this light, inimical feelings toward the Jews, which is what anti-Semitism signifies, are quite understandable. Here we have a minority group which possesses a cultural heritage differing in a number of ways from that of the dominant group. Jews have customs and traditions and, what is even more important, a religion, which differ from those of the groups among whom they live.

Prejudice against the Jews, as intimated, is perhaps more persistent and deep-rooted than that against any other group. The explanation for this may be found, at least partly, in the peculiar position they occupy in history. To begin with, they have been a people without a country of their own for many centuries. Dominated by a strong ethnocentric feeling and conviction of possessing superior values, the Jews started immediately upon the loss of their commonwealth and their dispersion to erect barriers which separated them from their neighbors and made it possible for them to maintain themselves as a group under the most adverse conditions. This separatism and insistence upon preserving their own religion and other cultural values became a constant source of irritation to the peoples among whom they lived and who invariably constituted the dominant element. Insubordination and refusal to conform are qualities which are always strongly resented and often condemned. The outstanding fact, then, in the history of Gentile hostility towards the Jews has been, on the one hand, the tenacity with which the latter clung to their particularistic religion and culture and their refusal to adopt the faith and

culture of the majority, and, on the other, the resentment of this on the part of the Gentiles.

The Jews, thus, have been living as a cultural minority for many centuries in almost every country of the world. Everywhere they have shown the same tenacious clinging to their own cultural values issuing primarily from their religion and hence rooted in and nourished by it. What was at first an effort on the part of the Jews to maintain themselves as a cultural entity soon turned into a situation in which they were forced to do so by a hostile world. At various periods in their history, especially in more recent times, valiant attempts were made by them to break through the barriers imposed upon them, to mix freely with their neighbors, and to be accepted by them on equal terms, only to discover that it was of little avail. The world kept insisting upon keeping them apart and treating them as strangers and even enemies.

The Jew as a Scapegoat

An important factor in the perpetuation of hostility toward the Jews is the need that nations have for a scapegoat. Indeed, it might be said that had there been no Jews it would have been necessary to invent them, if for no other purpose than to heap all possible blames upon them. Being a defenseless minority, they constituted an admirable target for attacks. They can be attacked with impunity. Whenever conditions demanded a scapegoat, Jews have been selected for the role. Misfortunes of all kinds have been blamed upon them, because this made it possible to divert the attention of the people from the actual cause, whether it was faulty or irresponsible leadership, bad economic conditions, an epidemic, war, or any other calamity. Aggression was thus diverted from the real object of attack to the Jews. This is a stratagem which has been employed against the Jews through the centuries and with "success."

A Vicious Circle

Hostility and persecution on the part of the Gentile world had all along the effect of strengthening the group solidarity

among the Jews and of intensifying their desire to cling to their own culture with even greater tenacity. This, in turn, had the effect of keeping alive the hostile feelings of their neighbors towards them. We thus witness a kind of a vicious circle, the breaking of which depends upon both sides involved, the Jews and Gentiles, with the greater responsibility falling, of course, upon the stronger, the dominant group.

Living in a world where prejudice, discrimination, persecution and all kinds of disabilities were their lot, where they had to put up an extraordinary struggle to maintain themselves, Jews had to make certain adjustments to situations and to develop abilities along certain lines which, while hardly objectionable in themselves, have been looked upon as such and condemned because of hostility toward them. Their tendencies to live in cities and to enter business and the professions are among these adjustments, and they are plainly an outgrowth of circumstances and conditions under which the Jews had to live. Thus, if Jews tend to concentrate in urban areas it is because they were for centuries forbidden to live in rural areas and to engage in agriculture. Such a tendency is observable in the U.S. also among groups with a definite rural background, such as the Irish and Italians. Again, if Jews tend to be disproportionately represented in trade, commerce, and the professions, it is because these occupations offered them the only means of a livelihood, or were the only ones accessible to them.

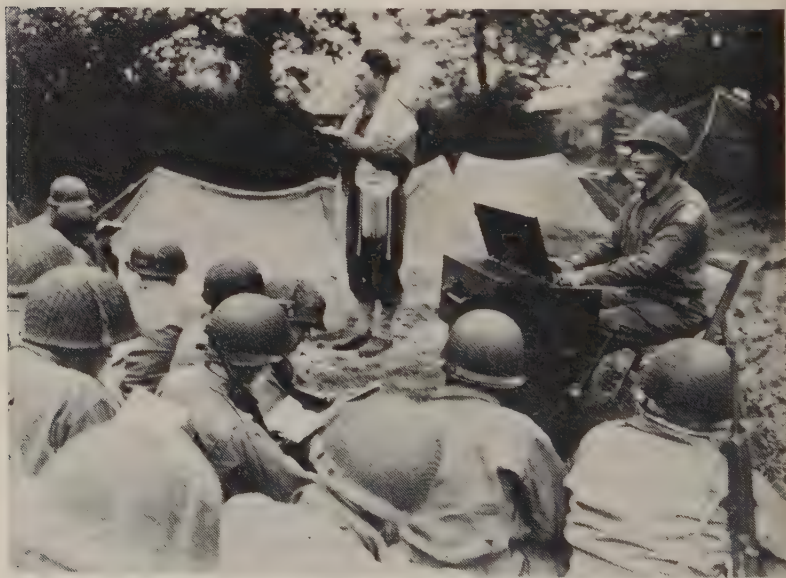
PSYCHOLOGICAL AND INTELLECTUAL ASPECTS

Similarly, if certain psychological and intellectual qualities are more common among Jews than among other groups, they obviously are reactions to conditions, or compensatory mechanisms. Thus, if more Jews than individuals of other groups are likely to display ambition, to be fired by a strong desire to get ahead, to be more persistent in their efforts, it is due perhaps to the greater sense of insecurity found among them, to the fact that Jews often have to overcome greater obstacles on their road to advancement, that they have to be better than non-

Jews in order to qualify for "desirable" jobs, and to a number of other handicaps. Their leaning toward intellectualism may be explained in terms of their history, the mode of life they have been forced to lead, their religion, their living in urban areas, etc. These characteristics, it should be noted, are far from objectionable; indeed, they are usually considered among many people, particularly in our own society, as highly desirable. Yet they are looked upon as objectionable when Jews display them.

Criticism Regardless

It seems that no matter what the characteristics of a group against which hostility is felt, such a group is sure to be criti-



While organized hate mongers circulated their propaganda that Jews as a group had ducked service in the armed forces and had got rich on war contracts, rabbis were holding services such as these on the front lines. Ben Hecht classifies anti-Semites into three types—goons, loons and little casinos. Translated, Hecht means stupid people, crazy people and little people with a psychological drive to be bigger than they are.

cized for possessing them. If Jews were mainly rural dwellers instead of city residents, if they concentrated in farming rather than in trade, commerce, and the professions, it is highly doubtful that this would not be held against them. The same would probably be true were the psychological and intellectual characteristics ascribed to them changed or even reversed. Indeed Jews are often accused of possessing opposite traits. They are alleged to be at one and the same time capitalists and communists, aggressive and shy, individualistic and gregarious, etc., etc.

Jews are often accused of clannishness and of harboring feelings of superiority. Again, insofar as these traits are characteristic of Jews more than of others, the reason may be found in their segregation, their non-acceptance, and their oppression and persecution. For centuries they have been forced to live among members of their own group, to depend upon one another, to oppose a common persecutor, and to share a common lot. As a reaction to the treatment they encountered, their feelings of being a select people, which, as we have seen, are true of all groups, have been maintained, and under extremely adverse conditions have even been strengthened. As a reaction to conditions and circumstances, too, they probably have developed to a high degree sensitiveness, touchiness, and suspicion, or, as it is sometimes referred to, an "oppression psychosis." This has been found to be characteristic of all oppressed minorities or groups discriminated against. These traits, which of course are far from characterizing all the members of the Jewish people, tend to disappear as conditions which brought them about are modified, that is, improved.

Stereotypes of the Jews

These characteristics and many others that have been ascribed to Jews have been as a rule highly exaggerated and distorted. The Jews have thus often been given a somewhat grotesque appearance. In other words, they have been stereotyped, made to conform to a non-existent, synthetic type, characterized

by objectionable traits found in some individuals. Very often a behavior trait, applying to a certain part of the group only and which is really a characteristic of a socio-economic section in the population as a whole, is applied to all Jews. Loudness, noisiness, and lack of manners are examples of such accusations.

The Group vs. the Individual

As in the case of other types of group prejudice, hostility or ill-feeling toward the Jews is directed against the group as a whole and against the individual Jew mostly as a representative of his group. This is because it is really difficult to dislike a person without some kind of a personal reason, but it is easy to dislike a group for no good reason, through mere conditioning. In other words, an individual to be disliked by another must more or less "deserve" it, while in the case of a group the dislike may be entirely "socially inherited." This socially inherited dislike is then transferred to the individual members of the group. Thus, the dislike of individual Jews in the case of anti-Semitism is a result of prejudice against the group which has been acquired through conditioning, usually in early childhood. What the prejudiced individual acquires is the aforementioned stereotyped picture of the Jews. All he needs to do then is to confirm or find support for his "beliefs," which he invariably does through experience with and observations of individual Jews, because if one looks for confirmation of one's preconceived notions one has little trouble in finding it. Individuals who do not conform to this stereotype can easily be considered exceptions without destroying the picture or even revising it. This explains why many anti-Semites may in all sincerity say that some of their best friends are Jews.

On the other hand, while individuals with undesirable characteristics are judged as individuals if they are members of the dominant group, Jewish persons are often judged by the supposed traits of the group. Every group has dishonest individuals, individuals who are shrewd, loud, aggressive, bad-mannered, over-ambitious, pushing, etc. Such individuals are

disapproved of as individuals. The group as a whole is not accused, is indeed absolved of responsibility for them. Not so in the case of the Jews. Here such an individual is looked upon as representing the group as a whole, as betraying its supposed characteristics.

How Stereotypes Arise

How is the stereotype of the Jew perpetuated? It is usually created in the mind of the individual when he is very young, in the most impressionable years of his life, by his environment which includes the home, school, and often the church. No matter what happens later, the picture tends to remain, unless counteracted by the proper kind of education and enlightenment, involving the psychological processes known as unconditioning and reconditioning. As in all other physical or psychic malformations, the best—and easiest—cure is prevention, in this case proper initial conditioning.

Anti-Semitism, we have seen, is an example of a hostile feeling which is frequently encountered wherever groups of cultural or racial diversity are in close contact, *i.e.*, live together. Basically, it is similar to any other prejudice against a minority. We have seen, however, that anti-Semitism possesses certain characteristics which stamp it as a special kind of prejudice. It is more common, more deep-rooted, more persistent, and perhaps of graver consequences than any other group prejudice. The problem is of such a nature that, unless an extraordinary effort is made, it is apt to persist and here and there even to be intensified.

Anti-Semitism Endangers All Society

Anti-Semitism for some time, especially in recent years, has been recognized not only as an injustice and wrong to the Jews but as a danger to society as a whole. It has been proven time and again to be merely a prelude to widespread prejudice involving all minority groups, as a symptom of a general social disease. It affects not only the Jew but the Gentile as well. Psychologists have repeatedly pointed out that the anti-Semite

is, psychologically speaking, as much of a victim of his prejudice as the one at whom it is aimed. In a democracy like the United States the danger is especially grave, for democratic institutions, democracy itself, are incompatible with anti-Semitism, just as they are with other types of group prejudice and discrimination.

SOLUTIONS TO ANTI-SEMITISM

Of the proposed solutions to the problem of anti-Semitism and the means currently employed to counteract it, some are more effective than others. Some seem to be utterly useless and some absurd.

Education Is Not Enough

Anti-Semitism is an essentially irrational attitude. Hence the efforts made to present facts and figures regarding the Jews in order to disprove accusations and allegations will not solve the problem, or even reduce it considerably. To be sure, the presentation of facts is commendable and is important and should be resorted to for the sake of truth and knowledge, but its effect can easily be exaggerated. Similarly, education is important, since much of prejudice is traceable to ignorance, but this too is limited in its influence unless it is the *proper* kind of education. Education *per se* does not seem to reduce appreciably, let alone prevent or eradicate, prejudice. The average "educated" person is not very likely to be much more tolerant than the average "uneducated" individual. Thus, while these things are desirable and necessary they must not be considered, as they often are, as effective ways of dealing with the problem.

Pleasant Gatherings Accomplish Little

In recent years a great deal of hope has been put on so-called good-will movements and gatherings, on the idea of getting together and threshing things out. Advocates of this approach seem to believe that it is a matter of reasoning things out, that once we bring people of different faiths together and "show"

them what nice groups all are and "prove" to them how silly it is for them to harbor mutual feelings of enmity all will be well. In the light of what we have seen the nature of prejudice, particularly anti-Semitism, to be, this is quite a naive way of attempting to deal with the problem. The effectiveness of such efforts is, at best, very limited. Indeed, insofar as they lull people into the belief that this is the way of solving the problem, they may even be considered harmful.

Lowered Visibility Is No Answer

Among the proposed solutions of the problem of anti-Semitism, the advice that Jews redistribute themselves geographically as well as occupationally in order to please Gentiles who complain about Jewish concentration in cities and in certain economic fields, and thus remove what is considered as a major cause of prejudice, is perhaps the most unfair as well as the most futile. It can only be matched in absurdity by the other suggestion that they behave as inconspicuously as possible, refrain from offending anybody, and lead at all times exemplary lives. The implications here are that they have to be better than anybody else. On the other hand, these suggestions sometimes carry with them the implications that Jews are a select group, a chosen people, which has got off the path of righteousness, forsaken its mission, and hence ought to return to it and serve as an example to others. All one can say in reply to such suggestions is that they are fantastic. That this is not the way to eradicate anti-Semitism must be clear to anyone who has even an elementary understanding of its nature and characteristics.

Basic Social Needs Must Be Met

What, then, are the most effective ways of dealing with the problem? Anti-Semitism, as noted above, is so inextricably tied up with the basic and complex problems of our society that its eradication is dependent upon the solution of those problems. Unless these are solved, all one can hope to do is to

check and control its expression, to prevent the prejudice from assuming dangerous forms—in short, to reduce its effects. Some of the phases of anti-Semitism which have not been dealt with here, namely the economic, political, and religious, are in a sense even more important than the social and psychological. Unless far-reaching changes are made in those spheres, the problem is destined to persist. This is particularly true of the economic phase. In recent times especially, the existence of anti-Semitism has been shown to have an economic basis, *i.e.*, economic insecurity and unrest account for its prevalence. Nevertheless, much can be done in the way of reducing the evil, providing there is the desire to go beyond the usual efforts, which, it must be admitted, have largely failed. Here we shall indicate in their barest outline the means to be taken in so far as the social and psychological phases are concerned.

Proper Conditioning from Infancy Is Necessary

Hostility between groups of different culture or race, while common, is not inherent in human beings; it is not biologically



Rabble rousers work on mild anti-Semitism to bring it to violence. Youthful hoodlum gangs infected with the poison of anti-Semitism under the guise of "Americanism" and "Christianity" probably wrecked this Jewish cemetery.

determined, but rather socially inherited due, *i.e.*, to conditioning. It is therefore not inevitable. Numerous studies and experiments tend to confirm this. *Proper* training, or conditioning and education, as intimated above, can do a great deal toward preventing this kind of feeling from arising and taking root. Here parents and teachers must be prepared and willing to inculcate in the child and to impress upon him the idea that differences do not mean inferiorities or superiorities. One's own group, its history, religion, and other institutions should be presented without undue glorification and as much as possible in its true light. This will lessen one's ethnocentrism and help one to view other cultures in a less biased way. At the same time an effort should be made to bring about, by means of concrete examples, an appreciation and sympathy towards groups and cultures other than one's own. This is a process which should go on at least throughout one's schooling for it involves concepts and principles that need constant attention, clarification, and reaffirmation. As the child advances in his schooling he must receive a true understanding and appreciation of the nature of culture and cultural variability. To be really effective, though, this kind of education must be started in infancy. These measures involve a radical departure from our conventional ways and imply teaching the child that other groups and their sets of values, beliefs, and practices are just as good as ours, albeit different. They further imply removing ourselves from the pedestals upon which we all have raised ourselves, giving up our cherished ideas of ourselves as superior groups. All this is extremely difficult of realization. It "goes against our grain." So it does. But the problem is a difficult one and will yield only to a very radical change in our attitudes. There is no easy road out of it.

Avoidance of Derogatory Ideas Is Crucial

On the negative side, a special effort must be made by parents and teachers to refrain from uncomplimentary allusions to and derogatory remarks regarding members of other groups

and their cultures. This applies with equal force, and perhaps even more so, to ministers and religious teachers. Religious education very often, despite its avowed objective of inculcating in children as well as adults good-will toward all mankind, spreads antagonism by implying, even if indirectly, that the faiths of others are false. Other aspersions may be even more damaging. Psychologists have pointed out that, for example, the teaching or implication that the Jews are Christ-killers leaves a most profound adverse effect upon those exposed to it, an impression which in itself may prejudice them for life against Jews. Parenthetically, it might be mentioned that the implication which is almost universal in our Western world, that Judeo-Christianity is the only civilized or true religious system, is certainly not conducive to an appreciation of other world religions. It goes without saying that this applies to Gentiles and Jews alike.

Democracy Encourages Diversity

The approach suggested here, although beset by almost insurmountable difficulties, has, however, the advantage of going right to the root of things. It is very much in line with the concept of what democracy in this atomic age must be if it is to survive and progress. It is tied up with the concept of an America where the various cultures can live side by side and influence and benefit one another, as they have done in the past and can do in the future; that unity does not require uniformity; that, on the contrary, diversity enriches a culture. Above all, it does not involve the unfair and impractical demand so often voiced that groups give up their cultural values as the price of fair treatment. To be sure, the suggestions given above are calculated to combat group prejudice in general. But, as pointed out, anti-Semitism is definitely a part of the total picture of prejudice and hence can best be dealt with as such.

PROJECTS FOR CHURCHES

By JOHN H. BLACKLIDGE

We have seen in this issue of *Social Action* the factors which make anti-Semitism possible even in the midst of congregations composed supposedly of those who love their God and their fellow men. Here are some specific projects which a church can use in dealing with them to build Christian brotherhood.*

Much anti-Semitism centers around allegedly disproportionate Jewish control of commerce, industry and the professions. To the extent that he is thought to possess such control the Jew is hated in part because of jealousy, and in part because he is felt to be disloyal to the American creed of fairness in one's dealings and of equality for all.

Get the Facts

Many people in the Geddes Congregational Church of Syracuse, New York felt this way about Jews in their city. The minister suspected the accuracy of their accusations but had no facts to prove his case. At his request Rabbi Benjamin Friedman of Temple Concord appealed to a member of that congregation for some data on Jews in Syracuse. They showed that, of the 648 attorneys in Onondaga county, 113 were Jewish and 535 were Gentile. Of the 349 doctors in the county, 40 were Jewish and 340 were Gentile. Of the 137 dentists in the city, 17 were Jewish and 120 were Gentile. Of the five largest department stores in the city three had no Jewish executives. There are nine bank and savings institutions in Syracuse. Of their 146 directors, only three are Jewish. Of their 102 officers, none is Jewish. This survey was used extensively throughout

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*Additional project ideas may be obtained from a free pamphlet entitled "Christian Social Action and the Jews" by John H. Elliott and obtainable from the National Conference of Christian and Jews, 381 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N. Y.

the church and a copy was mailed to all Syracuse Protestant clergymen.

Another project is this. Under the aegis of the Council of Churches, organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Association of Manufacturers, and professional groups of doctors, lawyers, and teachers could be approached. If a meeting were frankly called for the purpose of investigating causes of anti-Semitism arising from supposed Jewish control, suspicion would be quelled and misconceptions overcome. Demanding considerable tact and diplomacy, it is a strategy which a church could employ.

Another project is to organize an automobile caravan. Have one person in each car primed with facts about businesses and industries to be viewed. Drive up and down Main Street. Point out the stores, banks, theaters and newspapers under Jewish control. Observe that because of their high *visibility* they influence people's thinking out of proportion to their actual community importance. Drive next through light and heavy manufacturing areas. Point out what will so often be the case—most of the firms considered are Gentile controlled. Show that these are more important in community life than the conspicuous ones downtown. Show that many Jewish retail stores would not be in business without the payrolls of the big plants, whose tax money, in turn, makes possible considerable community control. Point out that actually "Back Street" controls "Main Street".

Fear of the "unknown" plays a part in some instances of anti-Semitism. The Jews are of another race, it is held, and therefore are sinister and strange. One church project placed several dozen copies of the pamphlet "Races of Mankind" in the hands of the congregation and special study groups. A copy went to the church's servicemen. One wrote that a chaplain on Guadalcanal had borrowed his for a "Sunday School" lesson for the men. The film strip based on the pamphlet served as an additional educational aid. As yet unfortunately the Protestant study material available on anti-Semitism is very meager.

Hatred of the Jews because they "killed" Christ is the basis

for some anti-Semitism. Even today not enough churches teach the Bible with due respect for historical criticism. Such an approach would show, of course, how it is by no means possible to prove Jewish responsibility alone for Jesus' death. It would make clear that the apologists for the infant Christian movement were striving desperately for self survival against a hostile Roman government and wanted to play down the evidence pointing to that government as having crucified their leader. In so doing they sought to avoid the danger into which they would fall when the fundamental antagonism between the way of empire and the way of Jesus was fully realized.

Animosity toward the Jews often arises from people who feel insecure in a world of tension. Their plight may range from a feeling of personal inadequacy in life to that of actual economic insecurity despite high personal qualifications for a successful career. The Jew becomes the scapegoat for their sickness. Church action would lie, first, in teaching persons ways other than anti-Semitism to find compensations for personal inadequacy. Second, church groups should work with other organizations seeking to achieve full employment and economic security for all persons capable and willing to work. People frustrated by economic insecurity are the most likely prey of anti-Semitic agitators. An examination of the December *Social Action* on "Roads to Full Employment" would be a start in directing church people's interests into constructive channels.

Here, in brief, are a few projects which can be used to combat anti-Semitism. In using them we will naturally remember that even if it *could* be shown that Jews do dominate our commerce, industry and professions, that they are a distinct race, or that they did kill Christ, none of these, from the standpoint of Christian brotherly love, offers any excuse whatever for hatred toward them. Since these charges are plainly untrue, even these obstacles to our Christian dealings with Jews are removed. The path remains as wide open for us to practice love to all men as the divine compulsion bears down upon us to do so.

Social Scene

A clerical colleague writes from the Holy Land that he recently flew from Cairo to Jerusalem in an hour and twenty minutes, though that journey took the Children of Israel forty years. This poses the promising prospect that mechanical invention can shorten the distance from slavery to the New Jerusalem.

But that depends—on whether the scientific intelligence with which we devise mechanical equipment is matched by a commensurate social intelligence in its use. That the modern machine has not always so been used is catastrophically clear.

Air Marshal William A. Bishop, Canadian Ace in World War I, with an added twenty-five years in civil aviation, in a piquant volume, *Winged Peace*, says, "Never again dare the people of the world allow air-power to be used without restraint by mad dreamers of world conquest, or monopolized by private ownership for the acquisition of profit." Accordingly he proposes that all military aviation and all international commercial aviation be in the hands of a World Government.

Clearly it will require a new mind for an air age. Or it will take more than forty years to move from the slavery of Egypt to the freedom of the Holy City.

Alfred W. Swan

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